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*The History of an OVARIUM, wherein were found TEETH,  
HAIR and BONES. By JAMES CLEGHORN, M. B.  
Communicated by ROBERT PERCEVAL, M. D.*

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GENERATION is a subject so mysterious in itself, and from the nature of things so wrapt up in obscurity, that any fact which may serve to throw light on this operation, by which the creation is continued, becomes invaluable to science. The greatest philosophers, of antient and of modern days, have spent much labour, and much industry, in order to discover the means by which nature has ordained the various tribes of animals to continue their species. But it is to be lamented that their observations have tended rather to shew the brilliancy of their imagination, than to elucidate the subject which they treated; and instead of lessening the number of difficulties which we had to encounter, they have only drawn off the attention of the world from facts, and misled mankind by the splendour of their fanciful hypotheses. It is by a careful collection of facts only, and a fair induction from those facts when established, that we can ever arrive at knowledge on this subject. At present it is my object to submit a case to the consideration of the Academy, which

Read May  
28, 1787

as it may serve to establish a fact of much importance in the subject of generation, may be well worthy the attention of the *Royal Irish Academy*.

THERE is no appearance which has hitherto thrown so much light upon the subject of generation as the formation and growth of fœtuses without the womb. Of extrauterine fœtuses none are so deserving of particular notice as these which have been formed in the ovarium, both on account of their rarity, and because a celebrated naturalist (who may be justly styled the modern Pliny) confesses, that it is difficult, and I believe he might have added, *impossible*, according to his theory, to account for their formation in the female testicle.

His words are as follow : “ On conçoit tres-aisément par  
“ ce que nous venons de dire, comment il se peut qu’il s’en  
“ forme quelque fois dans les trompes ; mais a l’égard des testi-  
“ cules, l’operation me paroît beaucoup plus difficile,” &c. &c.

AGAIN, Monsieur le Comte de Buffon, finding it so difficult to account for the formation of a fœtus in the ovarium, like a true theorist, seems to reject the fact altogether, and thinks his countryman, Monsieur Littre, ought not to be credited, when he asserts that an embryo was found in the ovarium of a woman he opened. The expression used by our author is, “ l’observa-  
“ tion de Monsieur Littre a paru fort suspecte.” Why Monsieur de Buffon has not taken notice of many other instances where it would appear from bones, teeth and hair being found in the ovarium, that conception had taken place there, I cannot say,  
unless

unless that he could not explain how they grew, according to his own theory, and therefore he rejects the fact altogether, thinking it of more consequence to establish his own theory than to propagate the knowledge of truth.

NOTWITHSTANDING the high authority of the Count de Buffon, I hope, by the instances I shall adduce from the observations of others, and by a particular case which I shall relate, to establish this fact beyond the possibility of doubt, and at the same time to vindicate the testimony of so celebrated an anatomist as Mr. Littre, by wiping off the aspersions thrown on his veracity, from an injudicious zeal to support a particular theory. Instances of fœtuses growing in different parts of the cavity of the abdomen are almost innumerable, but it is by no means so common an occurrence to meet with an embryo in the ovary, although, from many cases on record, it appears highly probable that they may have been formed there; since we find bones, teeth, hair, and other appearances, which would seem to point out the pre-existence of a fœtus in that organ.

THE case of which I mean to give some account is a very striking example of this kind, and affords several particulars equally curious and interesting; but previous to any history of this case, which has come under my own inspection, I shall take the liberty of stating, in as few words as possible, the most remarkable instances of the same sort which have been related by such authors as I have had an opportunity of examining.

THE first which I have found on record is one related in the History of the ancient Academy of Sciences, (Tom. ii. page 91)

by Monsieur Theroude, a surgeon in Paris. This gentleman shewed to the academy an irregular mass, which he took from the right ovary of a young woman aged eighteen years; in this were found substances resembling the eye-lids, with hairs in them similar to those of the eye-lashes and brows. He demonstrated also two bundles of hair, of which one was seven, the other three inches in length; near this were two dentes molares, hard, large and white, inclosed in an alveolar process, with a fleshy substance like the gums surrounding them; they were not above three lines in length. Besides these there were also found, in this instance, two other teeth, which we are told resembled the canini.

MONSIEUR MERY discovered in an ovary a bone resembling the os maxillare superius, with several teeth in it, so perfectly formed that they appeared to have belonged to a child ten years old. Of this case, we read in the same volume of the old academy, as has been cited in the last.

IN the Journal de Medicine (for January 1683) the Abbé de la Rocque tells us of a woman who had brought forth eight children, but died great of the ninth, which had grown in the ovary.

MONSIEUR DE ST. MAURICE has related the history of a *fœtus*, which he says was found in an ovary; it was about the thickness of a thumb, and its sex was distinguishable.

MONSIEUR LITTRE, in the Royal Academy of Sciences for the year 1701, has given the history, already alluded to, of an ovary which contained an embryo.

RUYSCH,

RUYSCH, in the third decade of *Adversaria Anatomica*, mentions his having found hair, bones, &c. in the ovarium; and in the second table annexed to that decade he has delineated (figure 4 and 5) a tooth which is a molaris that had grown in it.

THE same celebrated anatomist (*Thesaurus Anatomicus primus*, No. 17) gives the following short history of a woman's case, in which it afterwards appeared that there were teeth contained in the left ovarium, "Quatuor quinqueve abhinc annis, (says Ruyfch) "mulier quædam viginti et quatuor circiter annos nata, temperamenti phlegmatici, morbo graviore implicata, sæpissime con- "queſta erat, de dolore in Hypogaſtrio, non ſine præcordiorum "anxietate, et febris continua; tandem fato conceſſit, unde nobis "cadaver aperiendi nata occaſio." He afterwards proceeds to tell us that his ſon opened the body, and that they diſcovered a *cluster* of teeth which lay in the ovarium, incloſed in a membrane. [Theſe teeth are delineated in Tab. 3, fig. 1, of the *Thesaurus* above quoted.]

ONE of the moſt extraordinary inſtances of this kind is that related by Monſieur le Riche, in the French Memoirs for the year 1743. In this caſe there appeared upon diſſection a large ſac occupying the left hypochondrium, and attached to the uterus, bladder and colon. This ſac contained a yellowiſh ſerum like thickened or congealed oil, and a lump of hair the ſize of a lemon; the hairs were matted together by the oil, and about the length of a finger. About the bottom of the tumour there were ſeveral cells filled with a kind of tallow, and in the middle a bone of a very irregular figure, at the end of which were three  
teeth

teeth incased in an alveolar process: having dissected the whole of this sac with care, le Riche found it to be the left ovarium; the right one also contained similar oily matter, and a bone in its middle.

IN the memoirs of the French Academy (1756) an history is given of a foetus found in an ovarium. A young woman died after having had very violent pains in the left flank; she was opened, and little was at first taken notice of but a slight *inflammation* of the viscera. But what afterwards drew particular attention was the left ovarium: It was about the size and shape of an egg, and the tube of that side made a slight turn from below upwards, and from without inwards. Its fimbriæ were stretched and applied to the external surface of the ovarium, with which it had contracted an adhesion: When it was opened there came out about one ounce of a ferous fluid resembling whey. In this they found a foetus a little shrivelled, with a placenta and an umbilical chord distinctly formed, being one inch and a half in length. The foetus was two inches in length from the top of the head to the knees. The rest of the inferior extremities was withered, and only three lines in length. The membrane which formed the tumour was about one line and a half in thickness. The uterus was in the natural state, as well as the ovarium of the opposite side.

THIS observation was made by a Monsieur Varocquier, demonstrator in anatomy at Lisle, and is quoted by Sabatier *traité d'anatomie*, vol. ii. page 414. It is a remark made by Varocquier, and well worthy of attention, that this woman had an entire hymen.

A VERY

A **VERY** interesting and particular account is given of bones, &c. being seen in an ovarium by Dr. George Young, in the Edinburgh Essays, vol. ii. page 273. A woman aged fifty, who never had had a child, being obstructed for four months, thought she had conceived, but her menses returned, and she was troubled with a flooding more or less copious for above a year and a half. This complaint was at last put a stop to by the powers of medicine, but it gave rise to a number of other symptoms which occasioned her death. On opening her abdomen after death, a quantity of bloody water flowed out, the cavity being filled with a fluid of this description, and all its vessels very turgid. No bowel was at first view to be seen, all that appeared being a great number of irregular fleshy lumps full of a red watery liquor, some as large as apples, others about the bigness of pigeons' eggs, and of all intermediate sizes. Upon examination they found all these vesicles were contained in one sac, of which the forepart had been cut with the integuments of the abdomen. It was not 'till after they had raised this large cyst that the other viscera came into view. The left fallopian tube was very large, and no ovarium was discoverable on that side, unless this great tumour was the ovarium enlarged to so great a size. The right one was about the bigness of a new-born child's head. It contained viscid white matter like mashed brains, which ran together as suet does when put into water. In this were found three grinders, incased in their alveolar process, and an incisor, which may be seen delineated in the Medical Essays.

**MONSIEUR BAUDELOCQUE**, an Accoucheur at Paris, who has not long since published a Treatise on Midwifery, likewise relates a  
case



case where there were teeth, bones and hair found in the ovary. The tumour formed by it in this instance was six or seven fingers' breadth in length, and in thickness something about an inch and a half. There was in the middle, says our author, a bony rock (*roche osseuse*) in which were set nine solid teeth, which could be easily distinguished into the different species, viz. *incisivi*, *canini*, and *molars*. The rest of the tumour was of a *steatomatous* nature, and contained a great deal of hair matted together by the matter which formed the contents of the sac.

ONE of the most extraordinary cases of bones, teeth and such like substances having grown in the ovarium, is that of which I am now to give some account. I am sorry that any thing I can say with regard to the state of the woman who is the subject of this case must be imperfect, as it is given from report, and is not immediately within my own knowledge. Nevertheless, as the particulars which we do know are very well authenticated, and from their nature interesting, I flatter myself, therefore, that a detail of those, and a description of the parts concerned, now in my possession, will be deemed not altogether unworthy of the public attention.

ABOUT three years ago a woman, aged 50, died ten days after she had been tapped for a tumour, which had appeared to be a dropical collection in some part of the abdomen. This had been a tall well-made woman, and she had borne a child about twenty-five years previous to this period. She continued in good health for several months after delivery, and nursed a child, which was seized

feized after some time with very violent and frequent convulsion fits; nevertheless, after a while it recovered perfectly, so as to be quite healthy. The nurse, however, was observed to decline in her health from this period, and she continued weak and sickly for a year or more, but at last regained her usual good state of health in every circumstance, but that her menses never after appeared, and her belly increased in its size as if she was great with child. Notwithstanding this appearance of pregnancy she was known to walk lightly, to labour hard, and her legs were never observed to be œdematous. She appeared in perfect health, and never once complained of any uneasiness, except the inconvenience of carrying so large a belly. She remained in this state for upwards of twenty-three years, to the time of her being tapped, as above-mentioned. Upon withdrawing the canula a considerable quantity of viscid matter flowed out, mixed with hair and bits of fat. Ten days after having undergone the operation the woman died, and upon opening the abdomen the first thing presented to view, under the peritoneum, was a large seemingly muscular sac, which extended across the abdomen, upon opening which it was found to contain balls of a fatty substance mixed with hair, and likewise several bones.

THUS far goes the information I have received of such observations as were made at the time of opening this woman's body; but what follows is a description of the parts of generation, in the state they are in at present, in my possession, and as they were dissected by those who opened the body.

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To render the description more intelligible I have caused three drawings to be made from the preparation, which are sufficiently accurate.

Plate I.

THE bladder, rectum, and uterus, with its appendages, have been cut out entire, and along with them some portion of the labia pudendi, and of the podex. The bladder was laid open, to examine its state, and seems to be of the natural size. The vagina, os tinæ, and uterus are in a perfectly natural state; but to observe the thickness of its coats a niche was made into the fundus uteri. At the left side the fallopian tube (*g*) is evident, and also the ovarium (*i*) of that side: Upon the whole, the appendages of the uterus on the left side are in a natural state. At the right side the fallopian tube (*k*) and round ligament are very evident at the part next the uterus, but at the other extremity they are attached to the large bag or cyst (*l*), which we may reasonably conclude is the ovarium enlarged to this immense size. In order to have some notion of the capacity of the bag, I endeavoured to fill it with water, and from my observation I conclude that it would hold from ten to twelve quarts. The first drawing I had made was intended to give an idea of the size and appearance of the parts; and to shew the size of the cyst better I filled it with horse hair, as I also did with the vagina and rectum. The bladder (*b*) was laid to one side, resting on a piece of stick (*c*). Upon laying open the cyst we have a view of its internal parts, which are chiefly deserving of notice: I make no doubt that the viscid matter which flowed out at the time the woman was tapped made up the greatest share of the contents of the cyst, and  
what

Plate II.

what remains now within it is only whatever was attached to its internal coat. A great part of the cyst is even and smooth internally, but at that part of it which I conceive to have been the lowermost it is made very irregular and rough, by a great number of small pouches of different sizes, and several piles of bone: The contents of these small pouches are as various as their sizes are different; some contain a gelatinous kind of mucus, whilst others contain cretaceous matter. In some I found a brownish black stuff like bone which had been melted down and corrupted by putrefaction, and in others the contents resembled fat, and felt like it when rubbed between the fingers. In some there were hairs, and in others small fragments of bones. Some were attached by small peduncles, others adhered by their coats. The bones were very irregular, nor can I say that they resembled in every respect any one bone of the skeleton, although some of them had a good deal the appearance of being portions of the jaws: In particular, the pile, marked (*b*), resembled the os maxillare superius, having something like a palate plate, an alveolar process, and having teeth incased in it, as will be more particularly mentioned hereafter. There were also several other bones, some round, as (*c*), and some flat, as (*d*), but neither of those could be likened to any of the bones of the skeleton: They were all covered with a tough, tense, white membrane, which adhered very firmly to them, and resembled much the common periosteum: This was again covered by a production of the internal coat of the cyst; and feeling the bones through this thick coat, I once imagined that the flat ones were ribs, and that the round one was the skeleton of a foetus's leg and foot, more especially as there was a joint; but

Plate II.  
and III.

upon baring them I could not say that they resembled any of those bones. As to the teeth, they were perfectly regular in all their parts, having bases and fangs, and almost all being incased in an alveolar process and sockets, in the same way as teeth regularly are. They were forty-four in number, and the greater part was distinguishable into some of the species: Some were so unformed as that they could not be ranged into particular classes. There were eight incisors, three canini, four bicuspides, and sixteen molares. These could be reduced to their orders unequivocally, the remainder I doubted about. Several of them were of the first crop of teeth, whilst the greater number were evidently such as we should find in the jaws of persons of fourteen or fifteen years of age. I am convinced that some of the teeth may have been lost, and that there are others still covered in the cysts; for I have here given an account of more than were discoverable at the time the drawings were made. Sixteen of the teeth were incased in the pile of bone, marked (b); the others were scattered without order, except that in general it did not happen that teeth of different species were close to one another, but that incisors, for example, would grow in the neighbourhood of each other, and even in contact, so as that their fangs grew together. There was also in one part of this sac a distinct cell, in which was contained a quantity of hair, which seemed like the hair of the head, and which was matted into a cake by some matter, probably such as filled the cavity of the sac. Some of those little tubercles, (marked *a*, *a*, &c.) or small vesicles, which lay in the sac, were also beset with small hairs.

Plate II.  
and III.

Plate II.

THUS

THUS I have endeavoured, with as much accuracy as possible, and in as few words as I could, to state the particulars of this extraordinary case, and at the same time I have stated the observations made by others on similar occasions, so as to bring the whole under one point of view. Perhaps it may be expected that I shall also hazard some opinion with respect to the growth of those bones, and how they came to arrive at such maturity. This is a question which involves with it too much matter for an essay of this nature, and it is a subject of such intricacy, and admitting of so much doubt, that it is dangerous to attempt to explain it. I shall by no means pretend to decide the contests held on this subject, but I will lay before the reader two opinions relative to this subject, which appear to be the most deserving of notice, leaving it to his own judgment to which he should give his assent.

RUYSCH, in his *Adversaria Anatomica*, Decade the third, de Atheromate, decidedly delivers it as his opinion that tumours of this nature, whether found in the ovarium or not, will give rise to the growth of hair, teeth and bones. In proof of this he relates a very uncommon case indeed of a young man whose body was examined after death, and in his stomach there was an atheroma, within which was found a bundle of hair like the hair of one's head, and likewise a piece of bone of an irregular shape, about the size of an almond. There were also four real dentes molares, such as are to be found in a human jaw: Two of these teeth grew together, whereas two others had grown separately: But what would astonish an observer most, says he, is that the thigh of a small African deer was found in the same sac, and this thigh  
was

was as like the thigh of the deer as one egg is like to another (*ut vix ovo similis ovum*) except that its hoof was not cloven as in the deer, but covered with a nail at its end like a human finger ; and this thigh was moreover beset with a few hairs like those on a hand. What degree of credit is due to this story it rests not with me to determine : But to doubt the truth of it is not to call in question the veracity of this great anatomist, since he gives the following history of the relation : The preparation of this atheroma was given to him by Casper Commelinus, his Colleague and Professor of Botany, together with an account of the case in the hand-writing of Cornelius Smit, from whom Commelinus had received it as a present. From this it would appear that the truth of this story rests with Cornelius Smit, who had travelled with it all the way from the East Indies. But granting that hairs and bones were really found in atheromas of the stomach, is it not more probable that these substances may have been swallowed accidentally, and generated the atheroma, than that they were generated in this tumour ?

IN opposition to Ruysch's opinion there is another, which is supported by no less authority than that of the sagacious Astruc. In the second book of the Treatise on the diseases of Women, chapter xii. article first, § ii, he says, besides the common encysted tumours found in the ovaria, as well as in other parts, there is one peculiar species formed there by the putrefaction of embryos which have been there conceived and have perished. We find in the ovaria, he adds, steatomata and atheromata with bundles of hair in them, which have puzzled anatomists much to account for, but I conjecture, saith Astruc, (not without the appearance  
of

of reason) that these are the hairs of the foetus which has died here, and the hairs have continued to grow after its death, as they are known to do in dead bodies. If it be true, as Ruysch says, that teeth are sometimes found here also, it is incumbent on us to account for them in the same way that they have grown after the death of the foetus, as Bianchi is inclined to believe they did in a dead child which remained in its mother's belly for fifteen months after the natural period of gestation was ended: So far Astruc. But it is not necessary to give the teeth and bones a kind of vegetable growth, such as hair is supposed to have, in order that they should grow even to the maturity of adult bones. For we can suppose an inosculation of blood-vessels to have taken place between the membrane which covers the bones and the coats of the sac, and in this manner the bone will be supplied with blood and will grow; and as the teeth and jaws are supplied from the same trunks, it is reasonable to suppose if the jaw grows the teeth shall grow also, and as the stamina of the two sets of teeth exist long before they make their way through the alveolar process, we may even conceive in this way a second crop of teeth to be formed. This conjecture is founded on numerous observations, which prove that parts of animals, which have been separated from each other, and afterwards brought into contact, do frequently unite, and, by their vessels inosculating, have a free circulation of fluids through them. From what has been said of this woman's case it would appear that she had borne this tumour and its contents for the space of twenty-four years previous to her death; and it is wonderful that she could live under it without complaint for such a length of time. But our wonder will cease when



when we recollect that nature is infinite in her resources, which are admirable even in her most excentric deviations from her common paths.

It is a curious subject to enquire into how long nature will preserve a foetus in its mother's belly, without creating any other inconvenience than what arises from carrying about the burthen.

THE celebrated Bayle, professor at Toulouse, in 1678, has handed down to us the history of a woman who carried her child for twenty-six years; and Thuanus, the great historian, (*Historiarum*, lib. lxxvi. cap. x.) relates the case of the wife of one Lewis Carita, a taylor, whose child remained in her belly twenty-eight years; and Monsieur Morand, in *French Memoirs* for the year 1748, page 118, gives us an account of a child which remained in its mother's belly for thirty-one years. But there is a case quoted by Morand which happened at Leinzell in Suabia, where the child was in the mother's belly for forty-six years, the mother having lived to the age of ninety-six, and having borne two children in the mean time. Dr. Middleton laid before the Royal Society the case of a woman who carried her child in her belly for sixteen years, and during that time bore four children, all alive.

*An EXPLICATION of the three following PLATES.*

P L A T E I.

- (a) The orifice of the vagina.
- (b) The bladder, half filled with water\*.
- (d) The anus.
- (f) The body of the uterus.
- (g) The fallopian tube.
- (h) The fimbriated edges of the fallopian tube.
- (i) The ovarium of the left side.
- (k) The fallopian tube and ligaments of the right side, by which the great tumor (l) is connected with the uterus.
- (l) The tumor.

P L A T E II. and III.

- (a) (a) (a) A number of pouches contained in, and adhering to the internal surface of the tumor.
- (b) A pile of bone, with teeth incased.
- (c) A small round bone.
- (d) A flat bone.

*N. B.* The circumstances here referred to are much more distinct in the original drawings than in the plates, the former being of the natural size. In the third plate some of the parts represented in the second are again offered to view, but the bones having been laid bare, are more distinctly seen.

\* Since these sheets were printed, new drawings were made, from whence the plates were engraven, which makes some difference in this explication from the description contained in the history of the case.

*Page 90. sci.*





*PLATE II.*





*Ballard Pinx.*





a

a

b



*I. Maximin & Wull sculp.*

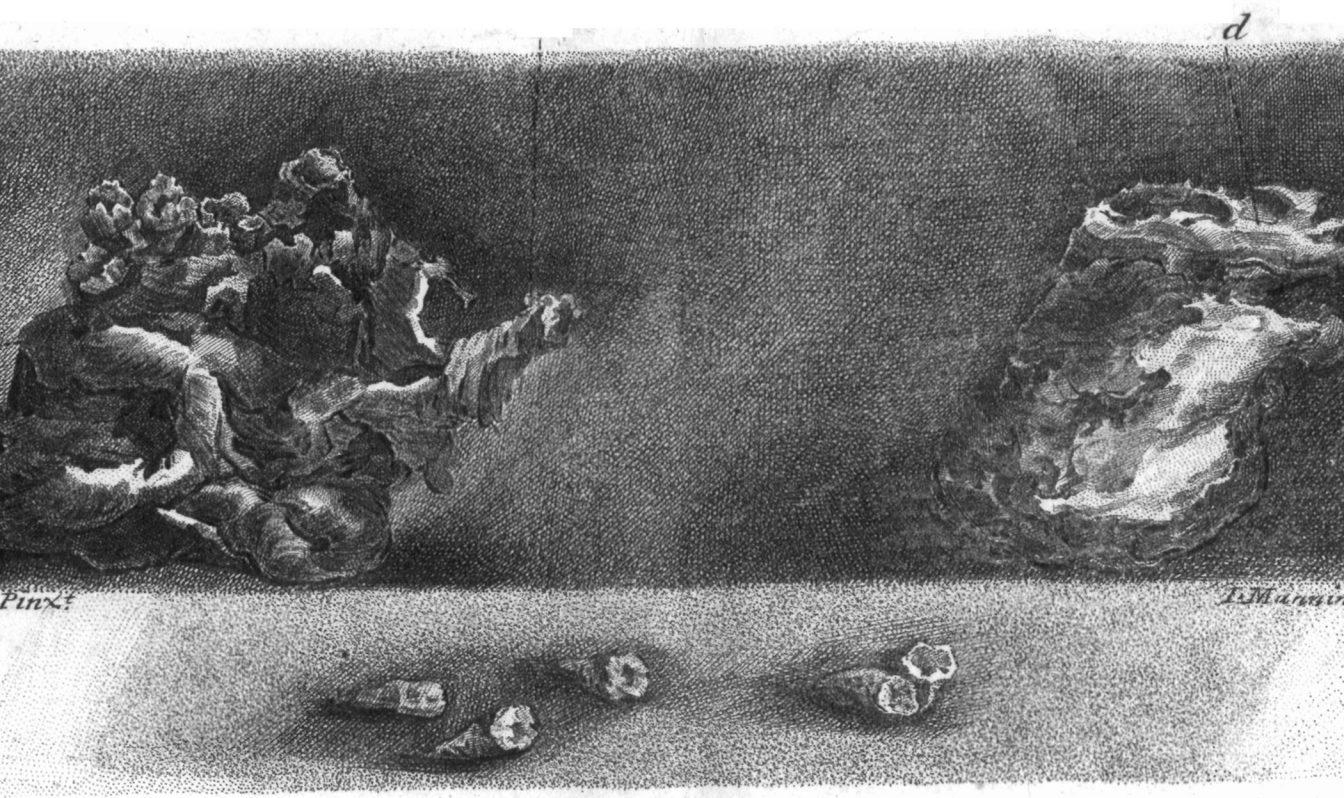


*Page 90. sci*

*b*

*Ballard Pinx?*





d

Pinx.

J. Munn

*PLATE III*



*Murray & M. Wall sc.*

*Page 90. sci*

*b*

*Ballard Pinx?*



d



*Pinxit*



*J. Munn*



*PLATE III*



*M. Wain & M. Wall sc.*